

## MINUTES OF THE MILFORD BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

June 30, 2004

**PRESENT:** Cynthia A. Herman, Chairman  
Gary L. Daniels, Vice-Chairman  
Noreen A. O'Connell, Member  
Leonard D. Mannino, Member  
Lawrence D. Pickett, Member

Katherine E. L. Chambers, Town Administrator  
Frederick Douglas, Police Chief

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Herman called the meeting to order at 7:00 a.m.

**-Police Sergeant Testing.** Chairman Herman stated her concern with the process to select a sergeant was Chief Douglas' discomfort with the Board scrutinizing his choice. The information provided to the Board raised questions in the minds of the Board members. Chairman Herman felt that Chief Douglas was not pleased with the Board's questions and probing. She feels that every time the Board tries to understand operations of the department or process, they are told their inquiries cause morale issues. How can the Board, the Chief, and the department work together without causing a morale issue every time? Further, how could the information that the Board would be choosing the candidate be out in the public even before the Board members had their agenda packets to know that? Board members started receiving calls even before the agenda was printed.

Chief Douglas stated he did not want the Board to think this behavior of rumor and assumption was unusual or that it can be otherwise. As the process unfolded, more information became available to the members of the department (testing and interview cuts) and people begin to make guesses and assumptions. Since the Board of Selectmen had not previously played such a big piece of the selection process, he thought this is what caused unease with the staff. He also noted that when the Board of Selectmen did not make a selection the first night, it shook everyone up. Chairman Herman asked what could we do? Chief Douglas stated perhaps appoint a Board of Selectmen member as a liaison to the department as has occurred in the past to develop a relationship and as a way of sharing more information back and forth. Vice-Chairman Daniels asked other than candidates, why should anyone else be involved with issues or have their morale be affected? Chief Douglas stated he agreed but stated that's how individuals behave. He didn't know what he could do about it. Vice-Chairman Daniels stated it was not the Board of Selectmen's fault, but he felt pressured and felt some questions were raised and needed to be answered. It should have been OK, perhaps the staff needs to be educated. He stated he was dismayed that the Chief's choice was known to the world before the Board knew. How is that possible, if the information had not been released? Chief Douglas indicated the length of time from the posting of the opening to the time of the completion of the oral assessment wasn't a long period of time. The time it took to get to and through the Board was longer than usual. Chairman Herman questioned who saw the results that the Chief sent to the Board of Selectmen? Chief Douglas responded by stating once the final cut to four officers was made, people began to talk and speculate. Once he sent the information to the Board of Selectmen, only he, two Captains, and his secretary were aware.

Chairman Herman indicated one officer being considered was so upset he went to Selectman Mannino's home. Chairman Herman noted the way information flies is a concern. Chief Douglas stated there was no way anyone knew what his 20% (of the score) was. Selectman Pickett stated the contract does not provide for the Chief to make a recommendation. The Standard Operating Guidelines do, but the contract supercedes the Standard Operating Guidelines, and that is where the problem is, the Chief's 20% made it look as though the other three candidates were not qualified. He stated it seemed only half the information gets down to the staff. When the Board of Selectmen did not make a decision the first meeting the message wasn't conveyed in a way as to make the staff feel comfortable, it could have been done better.

Selectman O'Connell noted when she received her agenda packet she felt uncomfortable. She looked at the scores; the Chief's numbers were counter to the other scores. If we had Captain Fortin's rational then it would have made a difference. Without more information, on the surface it looked like a "good old boy network". Chief Douglas stated

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he was not aware at the time the Board would want more information. Town Administrator Chambers noted that from past practice there was no way the Chief could have anticipated the Board of Selectmen would proceed as they did. Chief Douglas noted the feed back on the selection has been positive.

Selectman Mannino stated that given his past employment as a Milford Police Department officer, he has tried to make sure to remain impartial. Where he got stuck was the command staff's arguments in favor of one person or another based on experience and leadership. He felt those arguments fell short. Chief Douglas asked if it was appropriate to share the negative details of each employee's past that have led him to his decision? Selectman O'Connell noted the contract puts the decision clearly in the Board of Selectmen's lap, and we only had the barest of facts. Vice-Chairman Daniels added that perhaps the Board does need those details. Chairman Herman noted the Chief is always prepared but she felt there was more information that was not provided that existed.

Vice-Chairman Daniels motioned to enter into non-public session for the purpose of discussing a personnel issue at 7:52 a.m. Selectman Mannino seconded. All members were polled individually and assented to go into non-public session. After discussion, Vice-Chairman Daniels motioned to come out of non-public session at 8:39 a.m. Selectman Mannino seconded. All were in favor. At that time, Vice-Chairman Daniels motioned to seal the minutes of the non-public session. Selectman O'Connell seconded. All were in unanimous approval. No announcements were made.

**-Next BOS Meeting.** The next regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be July 12, 2004.

There being no further business to come before this Meeting, the Board adjourned at 8:40 a.m.

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Chairman

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Vice-Chairman

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